

Appl. No. 09/575,277
Amdt. dated April 18, 2003
Reply to Office Action of March 21, 2003

Remarks/Arguments

In response to the Restriction/Election Requirement dated March 21, 2003, applicant hereby elects Invention Group IV without traverse. Invention Group IV includes claims 19-35 and 38-40. Claims 17, 36, and 37 have been amended to be included in this Invention Group. New claims 41-54 have been added and depend from claim 31, which is part of Invention Group IV. The Office Action states that if Group IV is elected, claim 18 will also be examined. Therefore, it is respectfully believed that claims 17-54 are now all within the same Invention Group. No new matter has been added.

As an aid to the Examiner, the Applicant includes a copy of the International Preliminary Examination Report (IPER) for International Application No. US 98/23308. The IPER indicates that claims 1-24 are novel and include an inventive step not shown in the prior art. **The Examiner will note that claim 19 of the current application is identical to claim 21 of the International Application.**

In view of the above, it is respectfully believed that all of the presently submitted claims are allowable and a Formal Notice of Allowance is courteously solicited.

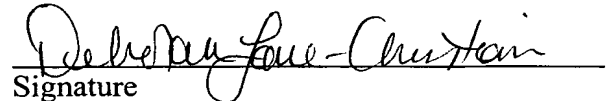
Respectfully submitted,
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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited in the United States Postal Service "Express Mail Post Office to Addressee" service under 37 CFR 1.10 in an envelope addressed to "The Commissioner for Patents, Washington, DC 20231" on:
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